

What makes a successful partnership? What is being done to understand and foster effective partnerships? Are there case studies that illustrate successful partnership strategies?

1. What makes a successful partnership? As the National Park Service (NPS) recognizes and embraces the importance of partnerships with ever greater numbers of governmental and private organizations, the service is questioning how to assess and improve existing and future partnership efforts. A workshop held in Santa Fe in 2003 explored the lessons learned from NPS partnership areas in the Western United States. A draft report outlines partnership case studies and characterizes successful partnerships, which

- engage all partners fully and equally
- foster a shared vision and positive change
- encourage shared control, problem solving and decision making
- create strong interpersonal relationships, trust, and ongoing communication
- foster appreciation and reliance upon one another's strengths
- encourage and reward creativity, risk-taking, innovation and entrepreneurship
- sustain leadership among agencies and non-agencies alike
- are grounded in a place and its traditions
- encourage place-based education and catalyze citizen engagement
- foster positive change
- create mutual benefits for all

The Santa Fe workshop built upon one held in Vermont in 2000 entitled *Collaboration and Conservation: Lessons Learned in Areas Managed through National Park Service Partnerships*, convened by the Conservation Study Institute (CSI) and QLF/ Atlantic Center for the Environment for NPS Park Planning and Special Studies Program. CSI, established by NPS to enhance leadership in the field of conservation, is itself a partnership with academic, government and non-profit organizations. A report of the first workshop is available at

<http://www.nps.gov/csi>

The report synthesizes what has been learned from partnerships in the past and delineates steps for how to enhance and sustain NPS partnerships in the future. The Santa Fe workshop built upon participants' experiences of the past three years, as the partnership climate changes and matures. A report on the Santa Fe workshop will be completed this year.

2. What is the National Park Service doing to understand and improve the dynamics of creating and maintaining partnerships? The Partnerships Council meets monthly to explore how the NPS can make partnerships work more effectively. The Partnerships Office works to develop and sustain partnerships that invite public participation, understanding, and support of the national parks and the mission of the National Park Service. A website is under development that provides resources and a how-to for formulating and maintaining successful partnerships. Visit the website at

<http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/>

The Joint Ventures Partners in Stewardship Conference, a three-day seminar coordinated by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reclamation, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, held in 2003 in Los Angeles, explored a range of ways that public and private organizations and programs are utilizing partnerships to achieve their goals, through hundreds of workshops on the concept, process and out-come of partnerships. Workshop reports will be posted as they are completed at

<http://www.partnerships2003.org/home.html>

3. What is the National Park Service doing to foster more effective partnerships?

The Conservation Study Institute of NPS and the Conservation Fund, US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center and Sonoran Institute have designed a program to train teams of residents and representatives from public agencies in "gateway communities," or jurisdictions and private lands adjacent to Federally owned lands, how to foster dialog and future partnerships. The Sonoran Institute is a non-profit organization that brings diverse groups of people together to achieve their conservation goals in Western North America, from Mexico to Canada. The Gateway Communities program offers technical assistance, televised workshops, publications, on-site training workshops and conferences (the next will be held in Savannah, GA March 2-5, 2004). For more information, visit

<http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=2290&back=true>

or

http://www.sonoran.org/programs/si_gpp_program_main.html

4. Are there case studies that illustrate successful partnership strategies? The Partnerships Council website posts partnership case studies at

http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/case_studies.htm

The Heritage Areas Program will post ten partnership stories from the individual areas to the website this year. If you'd like to post your partnership project, contact the Program Assistant at 202.354.2221 or Suzanne_copping@contractor.nps.gov.